

**FIVE KINDS OF SILENCE BY SHELAGH STEPHENSON: DEBATES ABOUT ABUSE  
AND NEGLECT AS LEARNED BEHAVIORS**

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**ABSTRACT**

Literature is a mirror which is held up to nature and human life. In other words, literary works which take their subjects openly from human life have majorly influenced the improvement of society, shaping civilizations, and changing political frameworks and revealed injustice and forms of violence. That's why, we have chosen a work of literature, a play, to deal with child abuse and neglect that may be caused by physical, emotional, or sexual harm, and can happen anywhere regardless of culture, ethnicity, or income group. Five Kinds of Silence by Shelagh Stephenson (2004) shows to the audience through three women who are obliged to continue their lives in fear of their husband or father that legal system cannot appreciate the wrath the women feel as a result of years of persistent abuse. The play also shows that even the murder of the abuser is not the end of the psychological torture that the abuse causes. The play is the criticism of the view that the end of the physical abuse is the end of the problems for the abused people. It is cleverly organized to demonstrate that there are no liberating endings in cases of child abuse. In the minds of his daughters and their exploited mother, the oppressive father, Billy, continues to live depending on the fact scarily personified by giving him a watchful post-mortem presence on the stage.

**Keywords:** Child Abuse, Neglect, *Five Kinds of Silence*, Shelagh Stephenson, British Drama.

## INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is one of the foremost challenges of modern times and that is why it has been a widespread subject in literature and especially in drama recently. It may be caused by physical, emotional, or sexual harm. It is very common and can happen anywhere regardless of culture, ethnicity, or income group. Abuse of the children sexually may be faced in different forms, for example physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is the introduction of a child to a sex-related activity or an action knowingly that the child cannot get it or concur to, which implies a child is upheld or communicated into sex or sexual activities by another individual.

The abuse of the child is the cautious exposure of a child to sexual activity that the child is not able to realize or agree to, which means a child is enforced or talked into sex or sexual actions by another person. Child neglect comes into existence when the ones who are legally responsible for the child consciously or overwhelmingly do not provide the basic needs of a child. It is strongly claimed that there can be a close relationship between childhood memories and the act of abusing children. In our study, we will analyse *Five Kinds of Silence* by Shelagh Stephenson (2004) in terms of child abuse and its dependence on childhood memories and its results. Through the play, Stephenson tells the story of Mary and her daughters Susan and Janet whom their wicked father, Billy, who is also abused by her mother in his childhood, has abused physically, emotionally and sexually.

According to the UN Convention on Rights of Children, education and development of the child are the duties basic to both parents. "Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern." (United Nations, 1989: 5). It can be understood from The Convention that major human right for all the children is to get the privilege to feel in security and be exempt from harm irrespective of their sexual orientation, race, background or age. However, every person does not have a chance to live in an environment in which they feel themselves as cared and safe. Many teenagers, youngsters, and juveniles are offended or ill-treated by the people whom they love or depend on. You can never be sure that someone around you is not a victim of abuse at the moment. That's why we have chosen to study on *Five Kinds of Violence* by Shelagh Stephenson whose main theme is child abuse in different forms and its effects on children growing in an abusive environment.

There have always been some playwrights who are interested in the topic of child abuse but it has been very popular among the new generation playwrights especially in the last quarter of the 20th century, and numerous new plays on this topic have been written ever since. Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans* (1925), Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955), Howard Brenton's *Gum and Goo* (1969), Michelle Morris' *Carla's Song* (1984), Claire Dowie's *Easy Access for The Boys* (1988), Mark Ravenhill's *Handbag* (1998) and *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat* (2010), Sarah Kane's *Crave* (1998), Alan Bennett's *Soldiering On* and *Playing Sandwiches* (1998), David Edgar's *If Only* (2013), Rebecca Prichard's *Fair Game* (1997) and Judy Upton's *Bruises* (1995), Shelagh Stephenson's *Five Kinds of Silence* (2000), Laura Lomas's *Bird* (2014), Frances Poet's *Gut* (2018) are the major plays which either focus on the topic of child abuse and neglect or are directly related to them. These plays are generally uncomfortable plays about victims of child abuse, and the puzzling difficulty of their relations with the one(s)

who abuse them. The new and distressing occurrences of child abuse and the silence of the society against these events play an important role in almost all of the plays. The playwrights explore the parental anxieties about child abuse, the results of the loss of the trust between family members, and the psychological results of the abuse that the children are exposed to.

According to Harpin (2013), it is in the 1980s that child sexual abuse is placed permanently on the social agenda in Britain. There are four major causes that secure its ineradicable existence: the persistent work of the women's movement; Child Watch which was broadcasted in October 1986 and the formation of Childline; the death of the victims of child abuse: Doreen Mason, Tyra Henry, Jasmine Beckford, Heidi Koseda, and Kimberley Carlile. These reasons diversely weakened the image of family, busted the likely safety of home life, offered an area for silenced voices, and jointly demanded that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland look and listen once more and in new ways that. It absolutely was the Cleveland Affair, particularly that made the confusions of kid sexual assault an important part of the social agenda. Moreover, it's this historical scandal that gives a significant purpose of reference for the play of British drama. However, "it is clear that the women's movement cemented the presence of child sexual cruelty in the public consciousness" (Harpin, 2013, p. 168).

Huge numbers of the plays written on this subject exhibit that the family unit remains the ideal form of the family though it is highly possible that it may bring heart-breaking ramifications for the people. These plays question the family unit, and it is clearly seen in these plays that when the nuclear family unit is approved as the standard, various issues in regards to the wellbeing of kids are raised and naturalized. Each play of the period deconstructs the nuclear family by giving an investigate and welcoming a re-examination of the family unit that brings about a suitable environment for the abuse of its members, especially children. It can also be asserted that as the society is in a silence against these unwanted events among the members of the families, the act of abuse can easily turn into a learned behaviour and be transferred from one generation to another. Shelagh Stephenson's *Five Kinds of Silence* deals with the possibility of child abuse as a learned and inherited behaviour, thus we will focus on the play and will try to show whether the children who are abused can be the abusers in the future.

In our study we will give the definitions and the characteristics of the concept of Child Abuse and then we will explore to what extent the characters in the play *Five Kinds of Silence* by Shelagh Stephenson have been affected from the abuse they experienced during their childhood and how this abuse shaped their characters and relations with other family members and all the other people. At the end of our study, we will conclude what are there the results that we have gathered from our study and how and why we have reached those conclusions.

### **What are Child Abuse and Neglect?**

Child abuse is defined by Goldman & Salus (2006) as "any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation;" or "an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm" (p. 20). Newton & Gerrits (2011) express that Child abuse comes about when children are hurt, mistreated, or not cared by the people they trust or depend on. Though child abuse is against the law and people generally believe that most of the abusers are foreigners, a

child can be abused by not only foreigners but also by another member of the family (father, mother, brother, sister, a relative etc.) in addition to someone they are less close to, such as a neighbour or a teacher (p. 7).

There is not a special place for abuse, that is to say, it can happen anywhere, even at home, a friend's or relative's house, or at school. It is likely that every child can be regarded as a victim of abuse, irrespective of their age, race, sex, or income level (Heide & Solomon, 2006). Though there are many different forms of abuse in general, we will focus especially on physical abuse, emotional or emotional abuse, sex-related abuse, maltreatment and negligence as they are the forms that we encounter in Five Kinds of Silence.

The cases of child abuse are much higher than reported because child abuse is a problem which most of the abused prefer hiding. As most abuse is investigated by the security forces and social workers who are obliged to get a complaint to get involved, it is not easy to determine how often it is experienced in a society (Newton & Gerrits, 2011: 9). Most of the abused children do not want to speak about it, because they may be too frightened or ashamed to tell anyone what is happening lest they or their abusers get into trouble, or they are of the opinion that people will not believe them.

There are various things contributing to abuse which is commonly related to authority and control. Abusers with power and can apply it to take kids, young people, and adolescents under their control. It is a adults' obligation to assure that children in their care are protected and away from hurt. Sometimes adults are not proficient or willing to tend to kids in light of addictions or stresses in their lives. Sharples (2008) asserts that this isn't a child's fault; however, is a result of adult status quo a youngster has little control over. Abusive act likewise takes place when a grown-up goes beyond the limits of teaching—taking discipline and amendment of youngsters too far.

According to Bergen (1998) the dominant understanding is that child abuse is caused by some combination of parental pathology, insufficiency, and stress related to environment. The assumption is that the violence is handed on from one generation the other. A man who was beaten as a child now beats his wife, and the one who is abused abuses others (p. 25).

#### **Child Abuse, Neglect and Its Effects in Five Kinds of Silence**

Five Kinds of Silence begins with a shocking scene in which two women accompanied by their mother murder their father, Billy. The father and the husband of the three women is killed by his daughters' shots, one in the stomach, then one more to his chest so as to be sure that he is really dead.

Janet     Is he dead?

Susan     He's stop moving, Janet.

Marry     comes in, bewildered.

Janet     I'm frightened he's not dead.

Marry     What've you done, Susan?

Susan We had to kill him, Mum.

Marry Oh. I should have done that.

Janet He's moving. I can see him moving.

Susan He's dead.

Janet Give me the gun. Best be sure.

...

She fires at his chest. He bucks and subsidies. They all stare at him fearful that he might suddenly revive... (Stephenson, 2013: 99-100)

The anger the women feel is caused by the persistent abuse they have been experiencing in different forms for a long period of time: physically, mentally, and more importantly sexually. That's why they shot again and again and their mother regrets that she herself did not murder her husband and let her daughters do it. Accordingly, they may remain quiet about the mishandle After her mother is put in the ground, everything changes and her father turns out to be a living corpse who neglects not only himself but also his little and fearful daughter. All those nights she waits for him silently all alone like a corpse in the grave. Marry reflects her feelings as: "As cold and unreachable as the grave, like the place they've put my mother. Sometimes I make a mewling noise, like a cat, to see what it sounds like, to remind myself I'm still here" (Stephenson, 2013: 119-120).

Despite everything, she never blames her father because, as Newton & Gerrits (2011) state, abuse influences how the abused think, feel, and act. It can influence somebody promptly as soon as the abuse occurs. It can likewise influence somebody long after the abuse has finished, in adulthood. Somebody who is being abused may feel disgraced, ashamed, or as though the manhandle is their guilt. Accordingly, they may remain quiet about the mishandling, which can make them feel as though they are in solitude. A child neglected by his father or mother, for example, may be confused about what to do because s/he knows that there is something wrong, but loves his father or mother and does not want them to get into trouble. Maybe this is the reason why, when Mary meets Billy, she sees him as a means to rescue from her prison-like life, as a new beginning. He can be the one who can take her out of the mental prison in which she has been living for years. However, their marriage is moving from one abusive relationship to another. "I love you", he says. Practically straight away she believes him. She was twenty. She knew nothing. She was lonely and he was handsome (Stephenson, 2013: 111). All those years the only thing she has learned is that you "Don't fight", that you "Keep going. You survive" (Stephenson, 2013: 124). For her, the only way to survive is to be free from any sense of feeling and this is what she teaches to her daughters as a self-protection mechanism. The only thing that she could teach to her daughters is that because all of them are isolated from the social life by the authority figure of the family, in other words, her husband.

All the women in the play are also subjected to physical abuse that also causes emotional harm. However, "physically abused children are more at risk for developing emotional disorders such as anxiety, depression, and

posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) because of their early experiences with violence" (Newton & Gerrits, 2011: 14). It is likely that Mary and Janet choose murder as their survival mechanism and murdering their father who abuses and terrorizes them paves the way for the theatrical initial scene, whereby the audience combines the pieces that result in this traumatic action. Likewise, murder as the survival mechanism for the abused children is also seen in *The Education of Skinny Spew* (1969) by Howard Brenton in which the child, Skinny Spew, is an example of the children who are generally corrupted, decayed or distorted because of the lack of smooth relationships with their families or the society.

Billy, who could tell stories from his past by means of monologues by which we figure out how he was abused by his own mother, reveals the pieces that constitute the tragic events in the play:

Billy. Washing day. Steam, wet sheets hanging, cold slapping against my face. I'm hiding. Suddenly someone's here. Big white arms. Big bony hands that do things I don't like. Punch me. Other stuff? ... Crack goes the bone of my head. Stars float, I'm laughing, ha ha, hit me again if you want, I won't cry. I never cry, me. ... I don't care me, if you cut off my arms and legs, if you hit me with the belt till my skin peels off I won't cry. I'd just laugh, right. But when I get bigger I'll bloody kill you. (Stephenson, 2013: 101)

As can be understood from Billy's expressions, physical abuse is the most visual or obvious type of abuse he experienced in his childhood. As Billy's story progresses in the play, we realize that he was accustomed to physical abuse through his parents' "biting and tearing and heads banged off walls, teeth fly blood spurts" (Stephenson, 2013: 104). It involves situations where his own mother hurts or injures not only his father but also little Billy's body and his mental health. The abuse of his mother is intentional, persistent and accompanied by neglect. She even pulls him by his arm, twists with both hands as if she is wringing out the washing. He must have felt so helpless and lonely that he threatens her mother in his monologue to kill her when he is big enough. That's why being bigger and powerful is likely the only way for him to take control of his life. In all his memories, he feels himself as a child of straw who deserve no light:

I don't remember pain, I don't remember pleasure. I was born aged six with teeth and a black, black heart...She's pulling, dragging me upstairs, I'm fighting back, bloody get off me...No don't shut me up in the dark, it's black in there...She says get in the cupboard, you'll have no light, you don't deserve it (Stephenson: 2003: 112-3).

Physical abuse that Billy was subjected to can be used as a means of severe discipline as well. Abuse is explained by Newton and Gerrits (2011) as discipline "gone too far". It causes a child to feel insignificant and fearful just as Susan and Janet feel. The discipline which aims at guiding, directing, or correcting behavior should be pure, foreseeable, and steady and should not be given when a parent or caregiver is very annoyed and may not be able to control (Asay, 2014: 54). When it is used to oppress and strictly control the lives of children, it transforms into a form of abuse in the hands of Billy, a control-freak. That's why Janet says the policemen that "they don't know what it's been like as their life's normal" (Stephenson, 2013: 105). Three women themselves come from a

different world. The only social environment they have experienced until they kill their father is their home which has been turned into an illegal prison. When the police try to investigate if they were knocked by Billy, it comes to light that he used discipline as a way of abuse. He persistently knocks them about for trivial reasons as reflected in a dialogue between the detective and Susan:

Susan We weren't to make a noise when we clicked on the light switch. Plates clattering. That wasn't allowed.

Pause.

Sometimes we buttered his toast wrong.

Detective Sometimes you buttered his toast wrong?

Susan In the wrong direction. The butter in the wrong direction. (Stephenson, 2013: 107)

It seems clear that the girls have been abused physically and psychologically for years but more importantly these are not the only forms of abuse that they are subjected to. They are also sexually abused by their father since they were 13 years old. The police persistently ask questions about if they are also sexually abused, and Susan and Janet recurrently say that they do not want to speak about it and try to change the subject. When one of the policemen asks them "Was there a reason for shooting him. You must have had a reason... Did he do anything sexual to you?" They all give the same answer all together: "We don't want to talk about that" (Stephenson, 2013: 103). The reason of their reply may be that child sexual abuse and exploitation are hidden and complicated forms of abuse which are very difficult to accept and express by the abused. Briere & Elliot, (1994) assert that abused commonly do not want to mention sexual abuse or disclose it happens. Janet discloses how difficult it is for her to accept that she has been abused by her father:

Every time I went to the hospital, is there anything you want to tell us? No, nothing, no. Because what could I say? Where would I start? And if I did, I knew he'd kill us all. Mum, then Susan, then me. In that order. Then himself. I knew he would because he told me (Stephenson, 2013: 112).

The family environment the girls live in is a stressful one and their psychological, physical and possibly other necessities are not being met, and this situation makes these girls highly open to any kind of sex-related actions. They are frequently anxious that in the event that they decline their abusers, they will be rejected, and they need urgently to be cherished by somebody. Schwartz and Isser (2012) stretch that in fact, a few young ladies in this circumstance look to end up pregnant on the grounds that they trust that in any event, the infant will love them unequivocally. On the other hand, they scare that they will be killed by their abusing father if someone learns about the secret relationship between them. The effects of the fear caused by the persistent threats and acts of Billy is so influential on the ladies that even after his death, they believe that he may come and kill them if they betray him. In their minds, Bill continues threatening them:

Billy They've tricked you, Susan, I'm not dead, not dead at all, and soon I'll burst through the window and kill you. Water streaming down her leg. Her eyes streaming. The dam is breached; the walls have collapsed.

Get up off the floor, you stupid bitch – Get up off the floor! (Stephenson, 2013: 108)

Sexual abuse they have experienced hurts the girls in so many ways, physically, mentally, and socially that they experience overwhelming feelings of shame, making it even more difficult for them to tell anyone that they are being abused. Billy also manipulates those he hurts. It is clearly understood that he threatens them not to tell it anyone and they may also feel like living in a jail which is guarded by their own father. As a result of this situation, Susan and Jane feel themselves free for the first time though they are put into jail as the murderers of their own father:

Susan/Janet Dear Mum, we are in a lovely place with gardens and a small pond -

Janet - with fish

Susan - and it is beautiful here.

Janet Last night we had baths -

Susan/Janet - with as much water as we wanted and it was as close to heaven as we've ever been. Everyone is kind, and our rooms are warm, people say the rules are strict but we just laugh

Susan - Janet and me. Sometimes we talk to lawyers.

Janet They are very nice.

Susan/Janet This is the first time we've been free in the whole of our lives, which is really funny when you think about it because a remand centre is actually a sort of prison, isn't it?  
(Stephenson, 2013: 110)

Especially their last sentence about being free in a remand center which is a sort of prison supports Barret and McIntosh's (1991) view about the nuclear family. For them "the exclusion of outsiders and turning into the little family group may seem attractive when it works well and when the family does satisfy its members' needs". However, this little-encased family can likewise be a trap, a jail which is developed of the thoughts of household protection and independence (p. 56). The childhood stories of the characters in the play, Billy, Susan, Janet, and Mary are comprised of neglect, physical or sexual abuse and this suggests that the nuclear family home is not a harmless environment for its children as expected. Stephenson is demonstrating that the nuclear family is incapable of protecting its children from those living with them in that enclosed environment (Busby, 2013: 171).

In *Five Kinds of Silence*, Stephenson gives an example of the families and their homes that turn out to be 'prisons' for the occupants and where different types of abuse are likely to occur. In contrast to many works of literature that depict the family as a kindle of a castle which protects its members from the dangers coming from the outside of the walls, Stephenson focuses directly on the dangers caused by the members of the nuclear family



living inside the walls. She also implies through Billy's narration that when the danger comes from the outside the walls, it is easier to protect yourself but if it comes from the inside of the walls all of us are extremely susceptible to dangers.

It can be understood from the play that there is a close link between exposure to violence and the use of violence by children and young adolescents. This demonstrates that abuse, in general, can be a learned behavior. As Miller (1987) states, children learn how to train others when they are trained on a subject. Children who are abolished learn how to abolish others. If they are humiliated in their childhood, this is an effective way of learning how to humiliate others. Those who are ridiculed also learn how to ridicule and at worst those who are abused especially in their childhood learn how to abuse. Both Mary and Bill are neglected and abused mentally and physically and thus they both neglect their children. Billy goes a step further and abuses his own children both physically and sexually.

The last few lines of the play reflect possibly the most disturbing aspects of the play. The three women, the murderer of the husband and father are forgiven for killing them because the judge verdicts that they have "suffered enough" during all the years they had lived being exposed to the abuses of Billy. It is time for them to create a new life together without psychological, mental and sexual abuses of their abuser, Billy.

Janet     We've got a maisonette.

Mary     We plan to have pink carpets.

Susan    And a dog.

Janet    We've got four bedrooms.

Mary     One for each of us.

Susan    And one for spare items.

Janet    We've already bought the shelving (Stephenson, 2013, p.134).

The suggestion here is that they are transforming system represented by the shelves which was a part of Billy's controlling mechanism. For the first time in their lives, they are free from the persecutor controlling their lives. For Busby (2013) the shelving system is used to carry on the obsessive, neurotic hoarding of household items for "emergency supplies...just in case...to cover all eventualities" (Stephenson: 2000: 121) symbolizes this. The memories of the girls created by the oppression of their father go on functioning as though they were observed by him even after he was killed by his daughters. Physically they are free of the persecutor but mentally they are not able to get rid of him (Schilling, Aseltine, & Gore, 2007).

## CONCLUSION

We can understand from the play that abuse and violence end in abuse and violence. Billy and Mary, who were abused by at least one of their parents as a child, either abuse their children or let the other partner abuse them.

Bill himself is an abuser who was abused in the past. Mary who is not an abuser of her children is also guilty because she tolerates Billy to abuse them for years. That is to say man hands on hopelessness to man and most abusers were themselves mishandled is hardly new, while the conflict that society is complicit in these violations by turning a visually impaired eye appears to be here to require the help of a sixth sort of silence, the silence of the people in the environment where abuse occurs. Where the play scores is in its discerning treatment of the ladies' conflicted reaction to the world from which they have been cut off for so long.

The way Mary, the mother, learns to survive is to cut off any sense of feeling and this is the lesson that she teaches her daughters. Mary has learned from the example set by her father and in turn, her children learn to repress emotions and feelings as a survival mechanism. As a result of Mary's example, Susan chooses murder as her survival mechanism, opting to kill the father who abuses and terrorizes the women. His death makes for a dramatic opening scene, after which the audience must piece together the events that lead to this action.

The play shows that abuse transforms the environment, which the abused are in, into a kind of prison except which they know nothing about the real world. Therefore, the two women abused by their father feel free for the first time when they are taken into a remand centre. The life they had before the murder was a kind of theatre play whose playwright and director was their father Billy. By means of discipline which turned into physical abuse that Billy used to control the women, they were forced to behave in accordance with the orders of the playwright and the director of the play. When the curtain comes down and the play ends, they begin to discover the world around them by trial and error just like children who discover the world. They buy Shredded Wheat for the first time though they do not like its taste but this is not important for them because it is their own decision that its taste is not good.

Just like Judy Upton's *Bruises* (1995), and Rebecca Prichard's *Fair Game* (1997), Shelagh Stephenson's *Five Kinds of Silence* (2000) reveal how their protagonists have learned abusive behaviour from their parents and transform themselves from positions of the abused into that of abusers (Busby, 2013, p. 169). Like many plays dealing with the theme of child abuse mentioned above, *Five Kinds of Silence* also describes the family homes turning into 'prisons' for the family members (Block & Krebs, 2005) and where the indispensable outcome is wife and husband assault.

By means of the various and ever-changing views presented by the plays written lately, the audience is urged to sympathize with killers in *Five Kinds of Silence*, (Stephenson, 1996) ruthless soldiers in *Blasted*, (Kane, 1995) child abusers and abusers of family members in *Age of Consent*, (Morris: 2001), and in *Bruises*, (Upton:1996), sequestered and deserted children in *Gum and Goo*, (Brenton, 1969), sufferers of abuse in *The Madness of Esme and Shaz* (Daniels: 1994) and *The Education of Skinny Spew* (Brenton (1969), figures of authority *Tuesday* (Bond: 1997), and the victims of poverty in *Shopping and Fucking* (Ravenhill: 2001). According to Busby (2013), it is generally accepted that these play could never be very popular among the literary critics because of "this empathy created by the production for the less desirable elements of society" however these texts make it possible for us to imagine ourselves in the same situation with the protagonists and antagonists and ask- what

if we were in the same situation? How far would we be ready to go if that were us? In this way putting the gathering of people in a trap of connections that can result in the re-evaluation of characters for which there was already no sensitivity. (Busby, 2013, p. 43).

Abuse has the capacity of hurting a youngster's ability to feel, share, and appreciate feelings, and can demolish their sentiment of confidence or certainty, which is a man's confidence in their hugeness and limits. People with low certainty encounter genuine troubles enduring that they have aptitudes and limits and are meriting veneration and love. As grown-ups, they may shape associations with other oppressive individuals or end up plainly injurious themselves trying to affirm control over other individuals to improve their self-esteem.

It is shown in the play that, when it is extreme, self-regulation brings about the loss of feeling for both the self and others and that this loss may result directly in abuse, neglect, and violence. In the play discussed here, this absence of feeling results in a passive acceptance of violence that grants permission for both mental and physical abuse. This study reflects the notion that the home space is not inevitably a safe space and that for some it may become as space of danger. I argue that the 'family home' may fail to protect those within its walls from dangers both from inside the home and from outsiders. The play ends on a consideration of elements of the play put forward that neo-family structures formed by young people may suggest an idealistic alternative to the dystopic futures (Busby, 2013).

The play shows that all types of child abuse and neglect will certainly disturb a child's psychological well-being as Egeland & Sroufe states (1981). Even though no single set of behaviors can be considered as the characteristic of all victims of child abuse and neglect, abused children frequently display some common problems. Physical abuse can easily lead to some important outcomes such as loss of life, traumatic brain damage or deformity, and it may also give rise to long-term mental health concerns like "violence, criminal behavior, substance abuse, self-injurious behavior, depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems" (Alreshoud, 1997). It is also understood from the play that whereas emotional and psychological costs of abuse might be shattering, whereas it sometimes does not leave physical effects (McCrae, Chapman, & Christ, 2006; Paolucci, Genuis, & Violato, 2001). Therefore, even though Billy, the father of the girls, is killed by Mary, he continues to haunt them persistently.

Stephenson, Brenton, Hare, Prichard and Upton and all the other playwrights dealing with the subject have all focused numerous evils inside the nuclear family structures. Each of them tacitly exhibits a family model hiding and preserving violence, which is perceived as the consequence of a thrilling form of the training of 'submissive bodies' by their fathers and mothers and "is the conclusion of a commodity society that educates children to be disconnected from the empathy of others and their own feelings" (Busby, 2013, p. 180). The endings of the Five Kinds of silence and all the other plays we have mentioned above wants the audience to re-evaluate their understandings of a nuclear family atmosphere as a safe place for the future generations.

As a result, the study we have made focuses on only one of the examples of the plays that deal with the problem of abuse and neglect, and their influences on the abused people. Therefore, the conclusions we have reached

cannot be generalized. It is very necessary that further studies concerning the plays about child abuse and neglect must be studied to have a set of more comprehensive and detailed results.

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